



STEVE COOLEY
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July 15, 2002

The Hon. Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, Third District
856 Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Chairman Yaroslavsky:

On this date, this office received a letter from the Board's Executive Officer setting forth Supervisor Molina's request that an appearance be made at the July 16, 2002 Board meeting to "give a report in conjunction with the Sheriff (Agenda No. 50.), regarding Sheriff personnel's involvement in the altercation on West Century Boulevard on July 7 (sic), 2002 involving the arrest of a 16-year-old male."

Any public discussion by this office at this stage would be improper and would compromise an on-going criminal investigation. With respect to Supervisor Molina's specific request for a "report on the subsequent arrest of the cameraman who video taped the incident," the cameraman, Mitchell Crooks, was arrested on an outstanding "no bail" warrant issued by the Placer County Superior Court. Mr. Crooks had been duly convicted and had failed to appear for execution of sentence in Placer County. Mr. Crooks, in addition to being a fugitive from justice, had been and was peddling to the media the evidence he possessed at the time of his arrest, i.e. the original video tape of the incident in question.

Peace officers, including District Attorney investigators, are required by law to arrest a defendant for whom a warrant has been issued. They are further mandated to deliver the defendant to the issuing court. To do otherwise would subject the officer to criminal prosecution. Penal Code section 142 clearly states:

Any peace officer who has the authority to receive or arrest a person charged with a criminal offense and willfully refuses to receive or arrest such person shall be punished by a fine not exceeding ten thousand

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dollars (\$10,000), or by imprisonment in the state prison, or in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

I have thoroughly reviewed the circumstances surrounding the recovery of the original video tape and the arrest of Mitchell Crooks. I am completely satisfied with the conduct of the involved District Attorney investigators. I am personally proud of their efforts.

For the above stated reasons and information provided, we respectfully decline the invitation to appear.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.L. Cooley", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

STEVE COOLEY
District Attorney

sgh

c: The Honorable Gloria Molina
The Honorable Michael Antonovich
The Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
The Honorable Don Knabe
County Counsel Bill Pellman
Chief Administrative Officer David Janssen
Press Room